



HR0312

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HOUSE RESOLUTION

2 WHEREAS, The members of the Illinois House of
3 Representatives are saddened to learn of the death of Ernest
4 "Ernie" Banks, who passed away on January 23, 2015; and

5 WHEREAS, Ernie Banks was born in Dallas, Texas on January
6 31, 1931; his parents were Eddie and Essie Banks; and

7 WHEREAS, Ernie Banks grew up in Dallas, where he attended
8 church and Sunday school at St. Paul's Methodist Church; he was
9 a gifted athlete, having attended Booker T. Washington High
10 School and lettering in basketball, football, and track; he
11 also played softball for the church team during the summer and
12 served as a batboy for his father's baseball teams; and

13 WHEREAS, While playing softball, Ernie Banks was
14 discovered by black newspaper publisher and ex-Negro League
15 pitcher, William Blair; under Blair's guidance, he joined the
16 nearby Amarillo Colts, a black semi-pro baseball team in
17 Amarillo, Texas; he played briefly with the Colts before being
18 recruited by the Negro Leagues' Kansas City Monarchs, a team
19 whose alumni included Jackie Robinson and Satchel Paige; he
20 made his debut with the Monarchs after graduating from high
21 school in 1950; and

1 WHEREAS, In 1951, Ernie Banks' time with the Monarchs was
2 cut short when he was drafted into the United States Army; he
3 served in Germany and Korea and was a flag bearer in the 45th
4 Anti-Aircraft Artillery Battalion at Fort Bliss; while at Fort
5 Bliss, he briefly played with the Harlem Globetrotters; and

6 WHEREAS, In 1953, Ernie Banks was discharged from the Army
7 and returned home to play for the Monarchs; in September of
8 1953, the Chicago Cubs bought Ernie's contract from the
9 Monarchs; on September 17, 1953, he made his Major League debut
10 at Wrigley Field, and eventually played in 10 games; he was the
11 Cubs' first African-American player and became one of a handful
12 of former Negro League players who joined the Major Leagues;
13 and

14 WHEREAS, Ernie Banks was among the greatest and most
15 popular players in the history of the game of baseball; over
16 the course of 19 seasons, he was one of the most potent
17 offensive threats in baseball and was a fan favorite for his
18 charm and cheerful disposition; he hit 512 home runs,
19 surpassing the 40-roundtrippers mark 5 times; he hit 277 of his
20 home runs as a shortstop - a National League record; he holds
21 the National League single-season mark for home runs by a
22 shortstop with 47 in 1958; he was voted to the All-Star Team 14
23 times and won the National League Most Valuable Player Award in
24 1958 and 1959, making him the first player to ever win the

1 National League MVP in consecutive seasons; and

2 WHEREAS, On December 1, 1971, Ernie Banks retired as a
3 player, but served as a coach for the Cubs from 1967 to 1973;
4 on May 8, 1973, he took over the reins as manager of the Cubs,
5 becoming the first African-American to manage a Major League
6 team; and

7 WHEREAS, Ernie Banks was a roving instructor for the Cubs
8 Minor League system from 1974 to 1976; he worked in the team's
9 community relations department and served on the Cubs Board of
10 Directors following the death of Philip Wrigley; he also served
11 as an honorary manager during the 1984 playoffs, was a frequent
12 attendee at special events, including Opening Day and the
13 annual Cubs Convention, and represented the franchise at
14 numerous Major League Baseball and charity events; and

15 WHEREAS, During and after his career in baseball, Ernie
16 Banks ventured into civics, business, and politics; he ran for
17 Alderman of Chicago's 8th Ward in 1962 under the campaign motto
18 "Put a slugger into City Hall"; he was a partner in several
19 business ventures and was one of the first black owners of a
20 U.S. Ford Motor Company dealership; he also served on the
21 boards of the Chicago Transit Authority, Jackson Park Hospital,
22 the La Rabida Sanitarium, the Glenwood Home for Boys, the
23 Metropolitan YMCA, the Joint Negro Appeal, the Woodlawn Boys

1 Club, the Chicago Rehabilitation Institute, and Big Brothers
2 Big Sisters; and

3 WHEREAS, Ernie Banks was elected into the Baseball Hall of
4 Fame in 1977 on the first ballot; he was the first player in
5 Cubs history to have his number retired in 1982; his flag flies
6 from the left-field foul pole at Wrigley Field to this day; he
7 was inducted as a member of the Major League Baseball's
8 All-Century Team and was honored on the field at the All-Star
9 Game in Fenway Park in 1999; he was the first player in
10 franchise history to be honored with a statue at Wrigley Field
11 on March 31, 2008; and

12 WHEREAS, In 2008, Ernie Banks was named a Library of
13 Congress Living Legend; in 2013, Ernie was presented with the
14 Presidential Medal of Freedom, an award given to those who have
15 made "an especially meritorious contribution to the security or
16 national interests of the United States, world peace, cultural,
17 or other significant public or private endeavors", by President
18 Barack Obama; and

19 WHEREAS, Ernie Banks was preceded in death by his first
20 wife, Eloyce Johnson Banks, whom he married in 1959; 5
21 brothers, Samuel Banks, Benjamin Banks, Glover Banks, Robert
22 Banks, and Eddie Banks, Jr.; and a sister, Frances Wilson; and

1 WHEREAS, Ernie Banks is survived by his wife, Liz Banks; 2
2 sons, Jerry (Theresa) Banks and Joey (Norma Jean) Banks; 2
3 daughters, Jan Banks and Alyna Banks; a grandson, Marcelo
4 Banks; a granddaughter, Courtney Dozier Banks; 3 sisters, Edna
5 Warren, Estella Johnson, and Evelyn Lockhart; 2 brothers,
6 Walter Banks and Donald Banks; and his many nieces, nephews,
7 family, friends, and countless fans; and

8 WHEREAS, Ernie Banks will be honored for his countless
9 achievements and his pioneering role in baseball history during
10 the Chicago Cubs' opening night events on April 5, 2015;
11 therefore, be it

12 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE
13 NINETY-NINTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that
14 we, along with his family and friends, mourn the passing of
15 former Chicago Cub legend Ernie Banks, "Mr. Cub", who will
16 forever emphatically be remembered for his famous line, "Let's
17 play two!"; and be it further

18 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be
19 presented to the family of Ernie Banks as an expression of our
20 sympathy.